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Well did Dr. Patton, of New York, say in a speech at the anniversary of the London Missionary Society,—

“Sir, ever since I visited England, this watch-tower of the earth, I have felt as though I must go round to every sentinel, and, grasping his hand with the nerve of brotherhood, give him such a congratulation as would tell its tale upon his heart. O, it is when standing on such ground as this, that I feel, not as a son of Columbia, nor as a son of Albion, but as a Christian !

“And, sir, why may not this feeling have a wider range, and extend to nations? Why should we not go on in this holy path, till both nations are united in sacred affection and sympathy? When this is done, we defy Satan, with all the banded legions of hell, to stir up strife enough to make England and my country be at war again. No; as soon as the first menace of hostility should burst forth, as soon as the first trumpet of war should sound, the sympathies of millions would plead, the prayers of millions would be raised, as if each individual were pleading for a brother’s life. O, sir, when we shall be thus united as nations, war will be impossible; the spear will be turned into a pruning-hook, and the sword into a ploughshare, or hang in some ancient hall as monuments of by-gone barbarity.”

CIRCUMSTANCES FAVORABLE TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.

BY T. C. UPHAM, OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

It must be obvious to every one, that the circumstances of the age in which we live, are favorable to the projected Congress. Some of these favorable circumstances we will proceed to notice.

I. And one of the most striking, which arrests our attention, is the *great advancement of the people in nearly all civilized nations in power*. Hardly a century ago, and nearly all power, with the exception of a few unimportant republics, was lodged in the hands of the supreme executive, the prince, king, or emperor. It seems to have been a general sentiment, and to have been generally acted on, that the prince was born to rule, and that the people were created merely

to obey. In the public and political measures which were taken, whether for good or for evil, the people but seldom came into the account, and were but little thought of. But an unexampled change has taken place in these respects. Within a century past there has been a most wonderful diffusion of general knowledge. In particular there has been a rapid progress in civil and political knowledge; and it is probably in this species of their advancement in knowledge, that we are to look for the explanation of the people's rapid advancement in political power. In the nature of things it seemed impossible, that they should understand the true foundation of civil and political rights, and not understand the secret of their own strength. They clearly saw, if thrones had any foundation at all, they were built upon the people's will. If principalities and dominions arose above them like mountains, they felt in their own bosoms the kindlings of the volcano, which could expand, and shake them to atoms. But the people, having come to a right understanding and full perception of their power, have seldom been disposed to exercise it in any exceptionable way, provided suitable and seasonable attention has been paid to their rights. Sometimes their strong desires for freedom and representative government have broken out in acts of violence, but generally they have preferred to wait with a patient, yet confident hope in the ultimate consummation of their wishes. Sometimes their wishes have not only been acceded to, but their rights have been explicitly acknowledged in the concession. Sometimes constitutions have been given by the sovereign under the denomination of *octroyees* or grants; but the mere mode of the presentation is of but minor consequence, since such constitutions or grants are evidently extorted by the wants and desires of the people, and when carefully examined, they will be found to involve all the requisites of a contract between the sovereign and subject. In many other cases, the people have had a direct agency in forming them. During the last half century, besides some temporary and abortive attempts, there have been more than eighty new written constitutions established in Europe and America; and about one hundred millions of people are said to be ruled by them.

II. Another favorable circumstance is the *great progress which has been made in the various departments of science and the arts*. The situation of the world in this respect is very different from what it was a few centuries ago. If scientific knowledge is power in other respects, it is power also (which is perhaps not quite so obvious at first) in respect to the political movements of the world. The control which man, in the exercise of the powers Providence has given

him, has been able to obtain over the various forms and energies and processes of nature, has reacted upon himself, and accelerated his civilization. He has ascended rapidly in the scale of being, and with feelings of worthy pride looks downward on his former low estate.

In these remarks it will be observed, that we have not reference so much to the general spirit of inquiry and general diffusion of knowledge, which has already been spoken of, as to advancement in particular arts and sciences, and to discoveries in them of a marked and prominent character. We may perhaps illustrate what we mean by a reference to the discovery of the properties of steam, and the application of those properties to purposes of navigation. It must be obvious, that these discoveries and inventions have in effect brought provinces and nations much nearer to each other, than they ever were before; and while they have rendered much more rapid and easier the intercourse of men with each other, they have at the same time greatly increased that intercourse. By means of steamboats, canals, railroads, and telegraphic communications, the transactions in one part of Europe are immediately made known in another, even those that are most distant; so that the different nations of Europe, for this as well as for other reasons, have begun to assume the appearance of a single and closely connected family.

But perhaps a more satisfactory illustration of the connection existing between improvements in the sciences and arts and political melioration, may be found in the invention and the progress of the art of printing. It is owing to this wonderful and blessed art, that whatever is said, beneficial in its consequences and worthy of being repeated, is immediately circulated through the world. The channel of communication, furnished by the press, has in fact become a great and curious ear of Dionysius, through which the conversations in the extremities of the world, and even the slightest whispers, are collected and rapidly reverberated to our own fire-sides and homes. In many respects England in particular, and France, and Italy, and the Germanic states have become a common country with ourselves. In consequence of the increased facilities for printing and for the circulation of what is printed, we are enabled to listen to their debates, to take an interest in their discussions, to become acquainted with their discoveries, and to examine their plans for the promotion of the public good. In these respects, and in others, we are beginning to be one. The separating tendencies of a difference in clime and in language are yielding to the affinities of intellect and the gentle attractions of the heart, which have resumed, in some degree,

their natural and appropriate influence in consequence of the inter-communications of the press. And it must be evident on the very slightest reflection, that such a state of things is exceedingly favorable to the proposed Congress of nations. Their power, supposing such a body to be constituted, will be essentially of a moral kind; moral power depends upon the communication of truth; and this communication depends upon the press.

III. A third favorable circumstance is *the extension of the representative principle and the establishment of representative governments.* This favorable circumstance has already been incidentally alluded to, in the remarks on the increased power of the people at the present day. In a large majority of the written constitutions which have been recently established, the representative principle is recognized, although it is sometimes subjected to unnecessary restrictions. The principle of representation, as it is put in practice in France, and Great Britain, and particularly in the United States and the other American republics, may politically be regarded as the grand discovery and the prominent characteristic of these later times. When it shall become a little more extended and be more fully brought into action, it seems destined to operate a change in the policy of nations, in the highest degree favorable to the welfare of the people. That part of the representation, which is drawn directly from the people, will feel it a duty to become acquainted with their wants, sufferings, prejudices, and just claims. Operating in this way, and virtually introducing the people themselves to a direct share in the government, the right of representation will prove of vast benefit. The policy of nations has hitherto been essentially belligerent; but popular representation will be adverse to this policy, and in the same proportion will be propitious to the great objects which a Congress of nations proposes to secure. It is not true and it cannot be satisfactorily shown, that the great mass of mankind are at all disposed to promote those ruinous contests, which have blighted and cursed the earth. They have the feelings of men, and they cannot see the reasonableness of persecuting and putting to death those who bear the same image. And it certainly does not tend to remove their impressions of the absurdity of these measures, when, as a consequence of them, they find their children bleeding and perishing, and their substance eaten up with taxation. The people, therefore, may confidently be set down as entertaining feelings favorable to pacific policy, commercial intercourse, and light taxation; and the principle of representation, when fully developed, will not fail to give vast expansion and influence to their wishes.

IV. Another favorable circumstance of great importance, is, *that the public mind is, in some degree, prepared for the establishment of a Congress of nations.* Every great political movement requires a preparation of public sentiment; and if such preparation be necessary in the establishment and changes of a single nation's internal administration, it must be equally necessary to effectuate the institution of a supervisory administration, destined to embrace all nations. Without the favor of public sentiment, it could not possibly be done. We do not say, there is a complete preparation in this respect; we know it is otherwise; but we do not hesitate to assert, that public opinion is setting in the right direction, and that there is an approximation to the standard, which we wish it to establish. Many circumstances have led to this approximation. Civilized nations are already familiar with the name and the general nature of a Congress, established for international purposes. For two hundred years they have witnessed the sessions of such assemblies; and although the subject is presented in a new form, it does not come arrayed in perfect novelty. They have seen the effects of these assemblies in their measures, and with some undoubted exceptions, have looked upon them as beneficial.

Furthermore, as far as Europe is concerned, there is a basis laid for a permanent Congress, not only in a favorable public sentiment, but especially in the condition of the European states, considered in relation to each other. The nations of Europe, closely united together by other circumstances than that of mere proximity, have the appearance of a single commonwealth. Differing greatly in extent and power, the smaller states naturally cling to the more powerful for protection; and these last are so situated, and so equally balanced against each other, that one cannot move greatly out of its accustomed orbit, without disturbing the equilibrium of a long established system. This peculiar and complicated state of things, which historians have imperfectly indicated by the phrase *balance of power*, extending over numerous watchful and rival millions, and checked and controlled in its operations in a multitude of ways, evidently requires, in order to be kept in action and its proper position, the constant practice of consultation, supervision, and advice. The history of the past all tends to warn against supineness and want of watchfulness. The unchastened ambition of princes often leads them into measures at variance with the dictates of reason, justice and prudence. At one time, the equilibrium, so essential to the safety of all the states of whatever grade, is put at hazard by the arms and the policy of a Charles the Fifth; at another

time by the ungovernable ambition of a Napoleon, who aims to unite principalities and kingdoms in his own person, and to plant the pillars of an universal monarchy. The necessity of constant circumspection and intercourse, for the purpose of maintaining the appropriate arrangements or adjusting them when out of order, necessarily gives frequent occasion for international assemblies, justly entitled to the character of Conferences or Congresses.

V. A fifth favorable circumstance is the marked change which has taken place *in the sentiments of all classes on the subject of war*. Previous to the commencement of the present century, a decided expression, adverse to the continuance of war, and in favor of the prevalence of peace, could scarcely be made by any one, without his incurring the imputation of weakness and folly, unless perchance it was met by utter indifference. The right, and even the utility of war were scarcely considered open and debatable questions, since they were found to be so universally patronized by those in high places, no account of course being made of the lower and middle classes, on whom the curse fell with every possible variety of infliction. But the principle of representation has given to these classes the power of speech; and the power of speech has called into exercise the power of inquiry, reflection and reason; and a voice, unheard before, has come up, as if from the vast depths, loud and terrible, that war shall be no more. It is not merely the suffering multitude, the millions who bear the toil, the burden, and the blood, that begin to speak out on this all-important subject. We have now, in opposition to the practice of war, the opinions of men high in authority, placed in elevated stations, rich in this world's wealth, and rich too in the treasures of learning and prudence. They have heard the groans of their fellow-beings, and the heart of sympathy has been moved within them. The open and avowed advocates of peace, in the various classes of society, have increased an hundred-fold, and the increase of boldness, intellectual power and consistent zeal has corresponded to the augmentation of numbers. And why should we not expect it to be thus, when any considerable body of men is brought to reflect on the subject? What source of misery, which is under the direction and control of man himself, can be compared to this? When some terrible disease advances from country to country, when the seeds of the pestilence are scattered abroad by the Almighty, it becomes us to bow in submission and to hide ourselves in the dust before that Holy Being who knows our ill deserts, and whose secret ways are inscrutable to man. But in the devastations of war, it is not an Almighty Being, whose prerogatives

we are not at liberty to question, but one of the feeble, erring creatures of his footstool, that seizes the burning thunderbolt, and scatters it through the world. And what renders the act the more astonishing, it is not the mere impulse of an unforeseen phrenzy, the ebullition of a momentary madness, but a matter of calculation, and cool reasoning, and carried on in the very face of Heaven, and in defiance of the divine precept, *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*.

But it is well ordered in Providence, that criminal principles and practices do not fail to expose themselves, and ultimately to work their own cure. The cries of widows and orphans had been heard from every quarter, mingling on every breeze, but they were too little regarded. The symptoms were at last observed of a great political commotion; the clouds came; the thunders muttered; the lightnings gleamed; there was a quaking and rocking of the earth, and then there suddenly opened the grand volcano of the French Revolution of 1790, to the wonder and bountiful edification of all the advocates of war. At that dreadful period there were certain experiments, which had a wonderful effect in enlightening the sentiments of some classes of people. It was found that the glittering sword of war could strike upward, as well as downward; among the high and the mighty, as well as among the poor and powerless peasants. The scythe fell upon the neck of princes; those who had been clothed in purple and fine linen were arrayed in beggar's rags and ate their crumbs in a dungeon; the innocent children died with the guilty fathers; delicate women, the delight of their friends and the ruling star of palaces, were smitten by the hand of the destroyer, and bowed their heads in blood. And then were beheld the hundred guillotines, the horrid invention of the fusillades, the drownings in the Loire, the dreadful devastations of La Vendee, the gathering of armies on the plains of Italy, the bridge of Lodi, and the battle of Marengo. These were the beginnings of terrors, the opening of the incipient seal, but the end was not yet. For twenty successive years the apocalypse of the book of war opened itself from one end of Europe to the other, and on the ocean as well as on the land, in the thunders and fires which at once shook and enlightened and awed the world, of the Nile and Trafalgar, of Jena and Austerlitz, together with the dashing of throne against throne, and of nation against nation. At length the "white horse of death" was seen taking his way through the centre of Europe, and power was given to him to kill with the sword and with hunger; and he was followed by "the beasts of the earth," an army of five hundred thousand soldiers; and they were all offered up as

victims on the frozen fields of Russia, and the Kremlin, and the ancient and mighty city of Moscow were burnt upon their funeral pyre. The earth shook to its centre; a howling and a lamentation went up to heaven; the living ate the dead, and then fed upon their own flesh, and then went mad; the wolves and the vultures held their carnival, while Rachel wept for her children, and would not be comforted. Nevertheless the sickle of the destroyer was again thrust among the clusters; the wine-press of war was trodden at Dresden, and Leipsic, and Waterloo, till the blood "came out of the wine-press, even to the horse bridles."

After these dreadful convulsions were brought to a consummation, men began to pause and reflect. They witnessed around them a perpetual desolation; the noble and the mighty fallen from their high places; the poor made poorer, and ground into dust by taxation; families of all ranks mourning the loss of husbands, brothers, sons; the culture of the earth interrupted, and the once happy cottage and its vineyards all laid waste. And they very naturally asked, why is all this? Why have we been destroying each other, and making ourselves miserable? Their eyes were opened, in some degree, to their own dreadful infatuation; they saw and they lamented their exceeding folly and crime. We may now assert with confidence, although there is an infatuated party in Europe in particular, who are doing all in their power to urge nations once more into the dreadful career of violence and bloodshed, that the great mass of reflecting and judicious men are in favor of peace; they shudder at the thought of a renewal of the horrors of war; they behold, in such renewal, unsearchable misery to the great multitude of mankind without the compensation of a single benefit to any one, excepting a few ambitious chieftains, who are heartless enough to place the paltry glitter of their epaulets in the balance against the sighs, and groans, and tears, and blood of agonizing millions.

Since the beginning of the world, there has never been so favorable an opportunity for a great movement for the promotion of universal peace. There is a general pause among the nations, an awakened expectation, an earnest hope of some permanent good, at the same time a doubt and hesitation whither to turn their course, a fearful looking for of the return of past evils with a desire to avoid them; and if we can rightly read the signs of the times, like men in great perplexity, who know not where to place the basis of their hopes, they would hail the proposition of an international Congress as a solace for the past, and a joyful harbinger for the future.